

Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee

Washington Lempster Marlow Gilsum Sullivan Surry Keene Swanzey Winchester Hinsdale

Draft Minutes

Feb. 16, 2016 7:00 p.m.

Keene Public Library

Keene, New Hampshire

ARLAC members present: Barbara Skuly, Chairperson, Swanzey; Brett Thelen, Vice Chairperson, AVEO; Carl MacConnell & Gus Merwin, Marlow; Pablo Fleischmann, Gilsum; Jim Holley, Keene; Christopher John, Winchester.

Guests: Keene State College Students, Teal Hertz, Mike Lundsted and Matthew Cecchetelli

I. Minutes from December 17, 2015 were approved as corrected.

II. Teal Hertz, Mike Lundsted and Matthew Cecchetelli presented their capstone projects focusing on Beaver Brook. Subject areas are assessment of flood management practices and potential alternatives in Keene, and creation of an advocacy video. Discussion followed with suggestions from ARLAC.

III. Election of officers was conducted with the present slate of officers unanimously carried over: Barbara Skuly, Chairperson; Brett Thelen, Vice Chairperson; Jim Holley, Clerk.
Eloise Clark has been officially appointed as a Keene Rep.

IV. Permits

1. Photos showing location of proposed maintenance and PSNH pole replacement in Keene were received and sent to members. No comment from the Committee.

2. Discussed viewshed for the proposed placement of new lines along Rte. 12. Barbara mentioned that in the 12/23/16 reply from PSNH, it was stated placement was due to requirements by NHDOT. Barbara suggested we comment asking exactly what the requirements were and whether there could be negotiation with NHDOT to move the poles to better shield them. Agreed to make the comment to PSNH.

V. Projects

1. Public Water Access Advisory Board report is due this month. A few more comments added regarding access in Marlow.

2. Swanzey- Mitchell Sand and Gravel Permit passed Swanzey. Barbara and John Davis attended the hearing. Test bores to 300 ft show no water in the areas where they proposed deeper excavation.

3. Why Rivers Do That? Workshop in Concord. Discussed our possible sponsorship. Brett had made contact with the NHRC to coordinate with the Harris Center, but not expected for this spring. Also found to be expensive and would have to figure out funding.

4. Friends of Open Space in Keene forum April 12, 7-8:30pm. Agreed we would attend and bring a display. Pablo suggested he would mount our Atlas of the River for presentation. Barbara to explore having it updated. Brett offered a digital photo frame for use if everyone could submit pictures of the river.

5. West Street Dam Hydrology study was presented to Keene ConCom last month. A digital copy was sent to ARLAC members. Dam removal would restore the natural fluctuations in river flow; placement of flashboards would add to the effect of the dam and decrease the natural variation in river stage. It is generally accepted that the natural fluctuation in river stage over the year is a positive effect on rivers. With dam removal there would be a shift in aquatic bed and wetland habitats, but there would still be functional wetlands. Flashboards will change emergent areas to permanently flooded areas/aquatic bed. Removal of the dam would likely create a shift in the oxbow wetland vegetation but not affect Tenant Swamp. See pages 37-40 of the VHB report for details.

It is our understanding that there will be a presentation of this report to City Council. We are uncertain if comments will be allowed at this time. It was agreed we would simply point out the benefits of dam removal as outlined in the report if given the opportunity.

VI. Meetings

1. **Ct River dam relicensing meeting**, CRWC, Greenfield 12/22. Barbara attended via teleconferencing. She felt she could not continue to keep on top of all the information that is moving through and will have to drop monitoring this project.

2. **NRAC/SWRPC** – Feb. 24th LAC updates; needs & wants. Barbara will attend. It was thought using SWRPC for help with publicity would be good.

3. **Wildlife Action Plan** – March 8, Keene Public Library (Heberton Hall), 6pm

4. **NH Water & Watershed Conference** - March 18, Plymouth State College

5. **Wild & Scenic River Film Festival** - March 25, Red River Theater, Concord

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Holley, Clerk